

not when you believe in soup  
and I smiled  
her conversion widening the river of my kitchen  
by a Nile.

WITHOUT GROUCHY OLD PREMINGER

Before my Aunt Lil and Uncle Jimmy  
sold their tract home, piano  
and the gold Cadillac  
with the white upholstery  
to go to Costa Rica to buy a cantina  
in the banana groves,  
my Aunt Lil had a white fox stole  
she wore low on her shoulders  
with a mother-of-pearl cigarette holder,  
highheel wedgies, and a white, tight sheath-dress.  
A very sexy lady.  
A Gypsy Rose Lee  
doing what she pleased  
without grouchy old Preminger.  
Aunt Lil and Uncle Jimmy didn't get rich, though,  
down in Costa Rica, which in English  
really means "rich coast,"  
and since I was just a kid at the time,  
it was none of my business  
what they did with all that money.  
But today, 25-some years later,  
my Aunt Lil tells me  
how it was too damn hot down there  
in that godforsaken place to wear her fox.  
So hot that the white satin lining  
stuck to her skin like Scotch tape;  
the scorpions and bugs  
were as big as her shoes  
and got right in bed with you --  
and she never got so sick  
of bananas in her entire life.

-- Joan Jobe Smith

Fountain Valley CA